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**THE
FARMER
COMMITTEE
SYSTEM**



For over 30 years farmer committees have continuously served this Nation effectively and unselfishly in successfully administering farm programs authorized by the Congress.

On May 12, 1933, there was enacted into law the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 which authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish State and local committees of producers to act as agents of their members and patrons in connection with the distribution of rental or benefit payments.

Legislation in 1938 directed the Secretary to administer certain programs through elected farmer committees, and established the basic procedure for electing the farmer committeemen.

This was the origin of the Farmer Committee System.

The Farmer Committee System is unique. No other group of citizens has so direct a voice in running Government programs.

Your county and community Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committeemen have joined almost 100,000 other farmers who now serve in more than 3,000 agricultural counties in the United States. And many thousands more have served in past years.

This leaflet is a reminder that you have the opportunity every year to elect your local ASC committeemen.

The Farmer Committee System



A Committeeman Is Important to You

You and farmers everywhere are affected by the agricultural conservation and supply management programs of the United States Department of Agriculture.

To every farmer, even those who do not take part, it is important that these programs be run right.

Each farmer who serves as an ASC committeeman will have a hand in deciding the kind of programs your county will have and how they will be run. His decisions will help determine how much farmers will accomplish under the farm programs.

He is in a position to make lasting contributions to the soundness of conservation and agriculture, and to the improvement of farm income in your neighborhood and county.

In all of this, the individual committeeman's judgment and leadership count, as he works with other farmers on an ASC committee. And so does your judgment count, when you help select a committeeman to be your representative.

A committeeman's job is important to you. And so are the farmers chosen for those jobs.



Committee Responsibilities

Tradition and Confidence

The use of farmer elected committees follows the farmer's tradition of retaining, as his sovereign right, a citizen's voice and responsibility in public affairs. This tradition has survived the technological revolution in agriculture and the political, social and economic changes in the Nation.

Such tradition and confidence led the Congress and the Department of Agriculture to place upon farmer committees much responsibility for running farm programs locally.

ASC committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out Federal laws. However, within the regulations, they apply their judgment and knowledge and make their decisions.

County Committees at Work

ASC county committees have many duties and responsibilities.

In production adjustment, they determine size of individual farm acreage allotments each year, establish farm normal yields, consider complaints of producers, supervise referendums on marketing quotas, and determine penalties and adjustments.

In conservation, they formulate local programs, review farmer requests for cost-sharing on needed practices, and recommend changes in State and National programs.

In price support, they supervise the determination of producers' eligibility, appoint loan clerks and witnesses, and decide what is adequate collateral for loans.

In storage activities, they give general supervision to Commodity Credit Corporation-owned facilities, determine the adequacy of proposed farm storage, and determine the accuracy of loans.

In the sugar program, they hold hearings and make decisions on labor wage claims, and make determinations as to sugar payments and production.

In connection with emergency disaster assistance, they decide on the eligibility for and extent of assistance to victims of farm land damage by flood, drought, fire, and other natural disaster.

Committees have similar kinds of responsibilities in connection with the wool, cropland conversion, feed grain, and wheat stabilization programs.

Other Responsibility

ASC county committees review violations, hold hearings, and make other determinations and recommendations in connection with all programs.

Perhaps their most difficult responsibility is their role of impartial judge in a variety of cases that come under their jurisdiction. Often, it's a matter of balancing the general interest with the individual's interest.

They work with their ASC State committee and the Department of Agriculture, and are responsible for keeping farmers and others informed on farm programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Community Committees at Work

ASC community committees are often called the cornerstone of the Farmer Committee System because they are the foundation committees on which the system is built.

An effective ASC community committee works several ways for you and your neighbors. It gives the county committee the benefit of its intimate knowledge of agricultural conditions and farmer reactions in its community. It recommends measures needed to get the best results from farm programs. It carries program facts to the farmers in the community and explains them as needed.

Committees Have Dual Role

Farmer committees are uniquely adapted to the local administration of farm programs that reach out to individual farms.

Your ASC committee has an intimate understanding of farm problems and of people in the county. This enables the committee to make local adaptations of farm programs within the laws to meet the different needs of farmers.



You as a farmer directly affected by farm programs can have your say in how these farm programs are run locally. And you have the mechanism for transmitting ideas on policies and programs from the "grassroots."

Your ASC committeemen, both individually and working as a committee, have a dual role. They serve as representatives of you and your neighbors in these programs. They also serve as the representative of the United States Department of Agriculture.



You and the Committee System

Your Opportunity

You and your neighbors have the opportunity of selecting the best men available for this work as ASC committeemen.

By helping select the most able, energetic and forward looking farmers for committeemen, you take a major step to assure good service to yourself and your neighbors, and sound administration of ASCS farm programs in your community and county.

Well-chosen committees work diligently and make their decisions intelligently, equitably and firmly.

ASC Committees in County

The ASC county committees—one for each agricultural county—have three farmer-members each. The county Agricultural Extension Agent is an ex officio, nonvoting member of the committee.

Each county committee employs a County Office Manager who hires the necessary employees for office and fieldwork, and sees to day-to-day office operations under policies set by the State and county ASC committees.

A community committee of three farmers assists the county committee in each community within the county. Communi-

ties follow township, school zone, or other established boundary lines.

Some counties are so arranged as to constitute one community. In such "one community" counties, the community committee becomes the county committee.

The Election Process

Farmers choose both ASC county and community committeemen each year through a democratic, nonpolitical election process. Community committeemen are elected by direct farmer vote. County committeemen are elected by farmer-elected farmer delegates to a county convention.

Alternate community and county committeemen are elected at the same times and in the same ways. If for any reason an elected committeeman cannot serve, either temporarily or for the rest of his term, the first alternate committeeman serves in his place.

To hold office as a committeeman, a farmer must be eligible to vote in the committee elections and must reside in the county or community, as the case may be. He must meet certain other requirements designed primarily to prevent partisan political activity in committee decisions or operations.

You are eligible to vote in the annual election of ASC committeemen, if you are of legal voting age, have an interest in a farm as owner, tenant, or sharecropper, and are eligible to participate in any of the programs administered by the committees. If you are not of legal voting age, but conduct the operation of an entire farm, you are eligible to vote in the elections.

State Committees Appointed

All ASC county committees in each State are under the general supervision of an ASC State committee. ASC State committees include from three to five farmer members. State committeemen are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The State Director of the Agricultural Extension Service is an ex officio member of the State committee.

The State committee is responsible for administering farm programs in each State. Each State committee appoints a State Executive Director who directs the work of the State office staff under policies established by the committee.



For the Nation's Benefit

Confidence Justified

Evidence continues to pile up as to the outstanding success of the Farmer Committee System of administration in accomplishing the objectives of laws enacted by Congress.

Notable have been committees' achievements in farm income improvement, stabilization of farm commodity supplies, conservation of agricultural resources, and in helping farmers gear production to meet wartime needs for food and fiber.

Farmer committees provided the spark and imagination as well as the judgment needed in locally adapting and running ASCS farm programs. They have merited their neighbors' confidence by doing a capable, vigorous and dedicated job.

The committees are meeting the expectations of the Congress and the Department of Agriculture by doing their job in a way that is best for the farmers, the county, and the country as a whole.

Fine Record of Service

Programs administered by the committees over the years have involved huge sums of money. The incidence of loss has been phenomenally low.

The fine record of service and program responsibility is illustrated by the following examples:

Established the first soil-depleting and soil-conserving bases for farms.

Provided conservation cost-sharing assistance totaling \$5.1 billion from 1936 through 1962 to from 1 to 3.8 million farmers each year. Worked with thousands of business and professional groups to help establish or find sources of supply of conservation materials and services needed by farmers to carry out approved conservation practices.

Processed commodity price-support loans amounting to \$31 billion in the past 15 years. Made 176,630 loans to farmers since 1948 for constructing on-farm storage facilities with a capacity of 762 million bushels.

Since 1937, made Sugar Act payments to producers of sugar cane and sugar beets. The average for the past 10 years is about 67,000 producers a year. Since 1954, assisted more than 450,000 wool producers a year, under the wool program.

Approved cropland diversion assistance to 1.3 million farmers under the 1961 and 1962 feed grain program, and to 820,000 farmers under the 1962 wheat stabilization program.

Successfully operated the system of CCC-owned grain storage facilities. This now includes about 236,000 structures with a capacity of 977 million bushels, located on more than 3,800 different sites.

Established acreage allotments and marketing quotas annually. These include about 3.4 million individual farm allotments for cotton, peanuts, rice, tobacco and wheat. They cover about 78 million acres.



Keys to the Future

Living With Abundance

Farmers, their organizations, the Congress, and the Department of Agriculture have worked for over 30 years to develop, operate and improve farm programs to meet the needs of the times.

Since the 1920's, agriculture has—except during periods of national emergency—produced more of some commodities than the market would take at prices fair to farmers.

Farm programs have been devised to 1) help farmers balance supply with demand, 2) promote more orderly market-



ing, 3) prevent violent price fluctuations, and 4) assure fair and stable farm incomes.

Some programs worked better than others.

In the 1930's, programs helped stabilize the farm situation during a period of serious economic dislocation, while our Nation worked its way to better times.

Farm programs in the 1940's were effective in meeting war-time needs and in stabilizing postwar supplies.

In recent years, agricultural production has run 6 to 8 percent more than domestic and foreign markets would take. Even with our dramatic population growth and gains in agricultural exports, production in the 1960's may expand 10 or 12 percent over consumption prospects.

Such production has exerted a downward pressure on farm prices. At the same time, farmers paid higher prices for their purchases.

Farmers Are Victims

Today, farm prices are lower in relation to other prices than during the first 20 years of the 1900's. But low farm prices do not assure lower total farm production. Low prices often lead farmers to increase their output to stay in business.

Farmers have been the victims of their own amazing production record. Farm income has not kept pace with incomes in other segments of our economy.

Also, the cost to the Government of carrying huge surplus stocks is a burden. And more of our agricultural land resources are being used to produce food and fiber than is needed. This creates a problem of conserving our resources and of using them wisely.

Farm Programs Needed

Individual farmers operating 3.7 million farms can neither set prices nor make desirable adjustments in production, as industry can. Then, too, the farmer's production and income are affected by the uncertainties of weather, over which he has no control.

Even if farmers did have the power to do these things, it would not be good public policy for them to do it alone. Our Nation must have adequate food and fiber. Any error must be on the side of abundance.

Your Government has accepted responsibility to help farmers manage this abundance for the good of all the people. This Government responsibility has been expressed by the Congress in passing laws that made farm programs available to farmers.

This is where the Farmer Committee System comes in—to administer the farm programs.

Farm Program Goals

Farm programs on the books may need some changes in the years ahead. Some new ones also may be needed. However, there is general agreement on the goals of the farm programs for food and agriculture:

First, enable efficient farm operators to earn incomes equivalent to those earned in comparable nonfarm occupations.

Second, continue production of food and fiber at reasonable prices in quantities sufficient to meet all our needs.

Third, conserve and use wisely our land and water resources. Increase the efficiency of use of our resources through a speedup in adopting systems of management that help develop our economy and insure that our resources will last.

Fourth, adjust and balance the production of agricultural commodities whenever there is serious oversupply.

Fifth, hold down the Government cost of farm programs.

The success and accomplishment of farm programs based on these objectives bears directly on the future well-being of all the people.

Programs, People and Prosperity

Farm programs administered by ASC committees bear directly on farm prosperity.

Farm prosperity bears directly on business prosperity along Main Street in rural trading centers. As farm income improves, retail sales improve.

Farmers use increased income to buy more feed, farm machinery, transportation items, soil minerals and pesticides, materials for repair and operation of buildings and new construction, and food, clothing, household furnishings and equipment.

Farm prosperity bears directly on employment in a host of farm related and other industries. More than a third of the total work force in the United States is affected by farm income and production.

During a recent 2-year period, gross farm income increased \$2.5 billion. This increased flow of income to farmers stimulated local business and increased local bank deposits. It also generated some 200,000 more jobs from rural trading centers to large industrial areas where farm machinery and rubber tires are made.

In one of the two years, the value of tractor shipments for farm use rose 23 percent. This brought about increased employment and a sharp reduction in unemployment in farm machinery industrial centers.

As a matter of fact, the farm programs administered by ASC committees bear directly on our national prosperity.

Programs made available to farmers by the Congress can help farmers achieve incomes comparable to those in other segments of our economy.

The Farmer Committee System has much responsibility for successfully and efficiently administering these programs. Your elected committee of farmers has an important job. And their work is significant to you. Choose those who can serve you best. Give them your confidence and encouragement.

